



April 6, 2005

Honorable Ron Gonzales &  
Members of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan Task Force  
San Jose City Hall  
801 North First Street  
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Mayor Gonzales and Members of the Task Force:

The development of Coyote Valley, as proposed in the Coyote Valley Specific Plan, will permanently eradicate wetlands and prime farmland and will significantly impact surrounding communities and hillsides. In order for the Specific Plan to be environmentally responsible, it will have to address how it will mitigate these environmental impacts. The \$15 million that has been set aside to maintain the South Coyote Valley Greenbelt as a non-urban buffer between San Jose and Morgan Hill is a good start toward adequate mitigation, but it is simply that, a start.

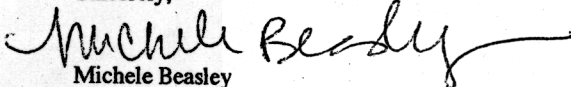
Greenbelt Alliance recognizes that planning for the Greenbelt presents a considerable challenge. However, we remain concerned that not enough money, in the form of mitigation fees from development in Coyote Valley, is targeted to greenbelt and hillside protection. Even though it is likely that other funding sources may become available, the \$15 million for mitigation is not an adequate contribution when over 3,000 acres of productive agricultural land are slated for paving. In addition, it is alarming that the proposed Specific Plan has yet to address the growth inducing impacts of Coyote Valley on open space lands beyond the Valley. It is imperative that planning for the development of North and Mid Coyote Valley include a concrete and comprehensive strategy for minimizing the development's growth inducing impacts.

Mitigation dollars are no less important than the dollars needed for new roads and sewers. At build out, Coyote Valley will likely generate tens of thousands of additional car trips along Highway 101. The increased tail pipe emissions will have a notable effect on Coyote Ridge, one of the largest and last intact native California serpentine grassland ecosystems. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will likely demand substantial mitigation for these impacts. One way to ensure that Coyote Valley reaches its development targets, meets the City Council's 16 expected outcomes and mitigates for environmental impacts is to study alternatives that are not only environmentally superior but that are also likely to be less costly than the proposed plan.

Greenbelt Alliance's vision for Coyote Valley, *Getting It Right*, may well provide the basis for an alternative that is both environmentally superior and more cost effective. *Getting It Right* does not call for the demolition of existing roads, nor the excavation of a new lakebed nor the introduction of an uncommon and likely costly transit system. By spending less money on components such as these, more money would be available to mitigate for the loss of prime farmland and the impact of development on surrounding lands.

The City of San Jose has a responsibility to undertake a thorough environmental review of the impacts of developing Coyote Valley and to ensure mitigation measures are identified and fully funded. Studying an alternative that is based on *Getting It Right* may well demonstrate a way to meet the City's development goals, stay true to the Council's 16 expected outcomes and provide the money necessary to adequately mitigate the loss of farmland and wetlands that will come with the development of Coyote Valley.

Sincerely,

  
Michele Beasley  
South Bay Field Representative

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